

GENERAL PRACTICE

FIRST SCIENTIFIC CONVENTION, SASKATCHEWAN CHAPTER



THE FIRST Scientific Convention of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the College of General Practice was held in Regina, April 24-27, 1957. Like the First Scientific Congress meeting of its parent body which was held in Montreal,

the meeting at Regina was definitely an unqualified success. In spite of heavy rain and generally bad weather there was a good representation of the general practitioners of the province. Doctors from Manitoba, Alberta and North Dakota, U.S.A., also registered, and, taking in the scientific sessions, Dr. W. V. Johnston, our Executive Director, also attended this meeting.

These Western Canadian physicians had the opportunity of hearing such authorities as Dr. Walter F. Kvale of the Mayo Clinic on "Hypertension, and the management of the peripheral vascular diseases", Dr. Burtrum C. Schiele of the University of Minnesota on "Tranquillizing drugs and mental problems", Dr. Angus D. McLachlin of the University of Western Ontario on "Common fractures, abdominal emergencies, and the management of the diabetic foot", Dr. Edwin M. Robertson of Queen's University on "Uterine hæmorrhage and early diagnosis of gynaecological cancer", Dr. J. W. Gerrard of the University of Saskatchewan on "Infant diarrhoea and respiratory infections in children". Dr. A. K. Roy on "Pruritus ani", Dr. Max G. Israels on "Cardiac emergencies" and Dr. A. J. S. Bryant on "The family doctor's office as a cancer detection centre". All these sessions were well and enthusiastically attended, as were the technical exhibits.

The first luncheon meeting was addressed by the President of the College of General Practice, Dr. Jack McKenty of Winnipeg. The second luncheon meeting was addressed by Dr. Gordon Howden, the President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan. Finally, the banquet on Friday evening was addressed by the Dean of Medicine of the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Wendell Macleod. There was also a very interesting and entertaining social program for the doctors' wives.

Dr. B. Hargarten of Saskatoon was elected President of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the College for the coming year, and the next Scientific Convention of the Saskatchewan Chapter will be held in Saskatoon in 1958.

A. S. SINCLAIR,
Regina

MEDICAL MEETINGS

MONTREAL PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The fifth regular meeting of the Society for the 1956-57 season was held in the Medical Building of McGill University on Monday, April 8, at 8.30 p.m. Three interesting scientific papers were presented which follow, in abstract.

1. *The action of gamma aminobutyric acid upon cortical electrical activity in the cat*, by Kitsuya Iwama, Herbert Jasper and K. A. C. Elliott, the Montreal Neurological Institute and the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University.*

The effect of topical application of γ -aminobutyric acid (GAB), in concentrations of 0.2 to 1.0%, was tested upon various forms of cortical electrical activity in the unanæsthetized cat with partial destruction of the brain stem at the level of the superior colliculus.

(a) GAB caused an immediate and reversible depression in the surface negative component of the primary evoked potential in somato-sensory cortex in response to thalamic stimulation. There was a slight increase and prolongation of the initial surface positive wave.

(b) There was a marked increase in the repetitive sensory after-discharge which follows a single thalamic volley.

(c) The recruiting response was changed from surface negative to surface positive polarity of larger amplitude waves.

(d) Spontaneous electrical activity was increased as much as twice in amplitude, and the polarity of "spindle bursts" was reversed to a predominantly surface positive form.

(e) Surface negative "dendritic" responses to local cortical stimulation were abolished at the site of application of GAB without affecting these responses only 3-4 mm. distant from site of application.

(f) Sensory evoked potentials recorded 0.5 to 1.0 mm. beneath the surface of the cortex were not affected either by surface application or deep injection of GAB.

(g) It is concluded that gamma aminobutyric acid has a selective depressant action upon structures in the most superficial layers of the cortex, perhaps only upon the molecular layer, without affecting deeper structures.

2. *Hypothalamic control of glycaemia and the blood picture*, by Louis J. Poirier and Jean-Pierre Cordeau, Department of Histology, University of Montreal.

The marked and rapid release of epinephrine (appreciated by the level of blood glucose) caused by restraint in monkeys depends on the integrity of the hypothalamus. This appears to belong to a nervous circuit which has its origin in rhinencephalic structures. Following interruption of this circuit, the animal reacts to neurogenic stimuli by a drop of glycaemia. Hæmatological changes, which occur simul-

*This work was aided by a grant to Dr. Elliott from Merck & Co. Inc., who also kindly supplied the chemicals.

taneously with the hyperglycaemic reactions in restrained monkeys, appear to be largely independent of the integrity of the hypothalamus. The light decrease of activation of the hypophyseal adrenocortical axis observed in restrained hypothalamic monkeys appears to be related to a decrease in reactivity of the animals to peripheral stimuli.

3. *Response to respiratory drive in mitral stenosis*, by D. J. MacIntosh, J. C. Sinnott, E. A. S. Reid and I. G. Milne, Cardiorespiratory Laboratories and McGill University Clinic, Montreal General Hospital.

The factors responsible for the increased ventilation associated with physical exercise and the mechanisms through which they work require further delineation. Ventilation during steady state exercise upon a motor-driven treadmill is found to be proportional to the degree of exercise as measured by the oxygen consumption per minute. The proportion is such that the expression

$$\frac{\text{Minute Ventilation, litres B.T.P.S.}}{\text{Oxygen Consumption, litres S.T.P.D.}}$$

is virtually a constant for an individual over a wide range of exercise. This expression, the oxygen ventilation equivalent, O_2V , can therefore be considered as an expression of the relative activity of the respiratory centre over a corresponding range of exercise and can be a useful expression in investigating the factors and mechanisms responsible for control of ventilation.

In 31 subjects suffering from mitral stenosis of various clinical intensities, the oxygen ventilation equivalent during exercise was found to be increased in all those with a significant degree of disability. Furthermore, simultaneous observations of the exercise O_2V and the systolic pressure in pulmonary artery obtained during cardiac catheterization show a significant correlation; $R = 0.694$, $S.E. = 0.182$.

It is concluded that the hyperventilation observed in patients suffering from mitral stenosis is in some measure proportional to the pulmonary artery systolic pressure. Explanation of this phenomenon in terms of the factors at present known to affect respiratory activity is unsatisfactory and the possibility is raised that there are other and unrecognized factors that may play a role in respiratory control.

A. H. NEUFELD

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON RHEUMATIC DISEASES

The Ninth International Congress on Rheumatic Diseases will be held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto on June 23-28, 1957. This is the first time that an international congress on rheumatic diseases has been held in Canada. Approximately 1400 delegates representing 40 countries will attend. About 225 papers covering most aspects of the disease will be presented. The four official languages (English, French, German and Spanish) will be used over a simultaneous interpretation system similar to that used at the United Nations. Moreover, *Interlingua*, the new scientific written language, will be

used for the first time in Canada. This Congress is sponsored by la Ligue internationale contre le rhumatisme, founded in Paris in 1927.

CANADIAN ANÆSTHETISTS SOCIETY

The Canadian Anæsthetists Society will meet in Saskatoon on June 24-26. Highlights of the program will include papers on Fluothane, barbiturate poisoning, extracorporeal circulation, and the Etsten hand ventilator. Round table discussions will also be held on "Group practice" and "The adrenal cortex".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MEDICAL PROBLEMS IN A RED CROSS CAMP

To the Editor:

It is now two and a half months since I left Canada for this most interesting project and I must say that I am still very pleased to have had the opportunity and the good fortune to come. It is an experience that would be hard to equal anywhere—a chance to work with a group of rather fine people who for various reasons have found it necessary to seek a new way of life. You can imagine the adjustment necessary to move suddenly from a great Canadian hospital to a situation in which I have not even the equipment necessary to do a hæmoglobin or a urinalysis.

Medically the problems are rather commonplace and perhaps reflect a general practice anywhere. There have been sufficient cases of interest to keep me on my toes, however, and some of them perhaps I will never see again—such as a primary chancre and the rash of secondary syphilis which I never saw in Canada during nine years of medical study. The big problem in a situation such as this is the general camp psychology. On the one hand these people are getting a relatively generous handout of food, clothing and other goods and they have to be educated that this is not going to go on after they get to Canada. On the other hand they all have a lot of personal problems concerning their past and present, and they have and will have a lot of disappointments and frustrations in the present and the future; a big part of the job is to see that they have enough to do in the camps to keep their minds off their problems and that they are informed as to what they can expect on their arrival in Canada. These functions are in the hands of a very capable Red Cross personnel in our camp and we have had only one unfortunate incident where the problem became acute.

JOHN W. DIGBY, M.D.

c/o League of Red Cross Societies,
Team Artillerie Kaserne,
Wiener Neustadt, Austria,
April 18, 1957.